

ARAB BATH SOCIALIST PARTY

**SOME THEORETICAL
PRINCIPLES**

**APPROVED BY THE SIX NATIONAL CONGRESS
OCTOBER 1963**

**DAR AL-TALIA
BEIRUT**

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INTRODUCTION

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Attention must be drawn to the distinction between, on the one hand, a theory of struggle formed as a result of confrontation of and involvement in the state of affairs through a series of violent conflicts between the masses and their enemies and those who oppose their progress, in which case the incentive is a response to the movement of history and a desire to promote it and, on the other hand, a theory formed in an ivory tower, when the incentive is intellectual luxury and formalist sophistry. When, as often happens, this distinction is not made, the result is a lapse into inability to take a comprehensive view and into divorcing things from the historical circumstances in which they arose.

A theory of struggle cannot be created overnight or in a year or two. It takes shape in men's minds and crystallises as the result of historical changes that confront the struggle of the masses, which is thereby obliged to define an attitude to them — an attitude that is at once vital and decisive. As a result, theory starts to grow and take shape, becoming a guide for the movement of the

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masses as they advance towards their objectives. No theory of struggle can easily accept social laws formed in a particular time and place, because the social reality is something living and constantly changing. Scientific law, although based on principles that are, in essence, immutable, does not have the same results when there is a change in the circumstances attendant on the experiences that led to the formulation of such laws. Thus revolutionary thinking will build up its theory piecemeal, although, basically, it is not isolated from the world heritage of humanity. Revolutionary thinking must put this heritage to the test on the whetstone of the existing reality; if it does not it will fall into passive acceptance of pseudo-scientific method, instead of adopting scientific method, and there is a definite distinction between the two. The former leads to rigid and ready-made formulas, and to intellectual petrification, and thus to isolation from the movement of history.

Our Party did not arise in isolation from the world heritage or the experience of humanity. It arose at a crossroads of the world revolutionary movement, and was the first movement to transmit and benefit from that heritage.

Our Party arose in a period that was a turning point for the socialist movement throughout the world. It decided not to submit passively and negatively to the influence of these movements; its attitude to them has been one of positive self-confidence. It has rejected both

reformist democratic socialism and the Stalinist application of socialism, along with the terrorism and juggling with the very principles of socialism that accompanied it. It has also firmly rejected the passive acceptance of Stalinist application by the communist parties of our country.

Our Party was one of the first world movements to adhere to the true socialist attitude, believing that the internationalist linkage, in the form in which it was propounded at that time, was artificial and served the strategy of a particular stage only, and that socialism can only be truly applied on the basis of the due observance of national characteristics and of the elimination of artificial contradictions that are of service to the exploiting classes. It also believed that humanism and internationalism can only exist on the basis of respect for these characteristics and of their being the opportunity of amicable and constructive interaction. The humanism of our thought is fundamental; it is not linked to a specific stage or a specific strategy.

It was by distinguishing between what belongs to a particular stage and is linked to a particular strategy and what is permanent and linked to positions of permanence that our Party was led to the idea of neutrality which, in reality, involved the rejection both of Western democracy and its reformist socialism and of the Stalinist application of socialism, which the USSR may have been compelled to adopt by the force of circumstances. Thus as far as our Party was concerned, the idea of

neutrality was not a matter of political opportunism as between two camps; it was an attitude deriving from concern for the survival of civilisation called forth by the historical development of humanity and its constantly renewed potentials. If progressive thought in the world today has grasped these facts to the extent that they have become self-evident, it was our Party that led the way, in spite of the difficulties it experienced, the effects of which can still be felt. If our Party is still misunderstood in the world today, the reason is partly the resistance to us of Stalinist subservience and its violent hostility to everything opposed to its own point of view. This is why our point of view was that what united us to the world heritage was knowledge. No theory can claim that it is the whole of knowledge. New social laws may be discovered which derive from a scientific basis, but they will never be able to absorb the whole of knowledge and dispense with it. Knowledge is a vast field and will remain so, because life, the source of knowledge, is a vast field.

On the basis of these fundamental principles the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party started its historical movement of thought and struggle, adopting the scientific method and firmly rejecting passive acceptance of scientific theories that are no longer relevant. This scientific method has led it to genuine discoveries as regards the Arab reality which are now generally regarded as indisputable. This has enabled it to lead Arab struggle and guide its steps. This scientific course has also enabled

it to expose the puerility of certain leftists and the ignorance of the right.

This method enabled it to disclose for the first time the real content of nationalism in the Arab homeland and in Asia and Africa; when it said "The Arabs are only striving to reunite themselves, to unify their regions and to rid themselves of the foreign yoke." Nationalism in Asia and Africa is an instrument for liberation from colonialism and all internal exploitation. This fact, which has now become axiomatic in both East and West, met with violent opposition from those who, wearing borrowed clothes, advocated passive acceptance of scientific theories that are no longer relevant. These maintained that the nationalist call was a bourgeois, racist call, and anti-humanist, forgetting that "there is nothing in our nationalism that allows a man to think that it is a matter of repelling the peril of the Arabs and obstructing their expansion and tyranny, when they are today complaining of being ruled by other nations", while the humanist call, in the form in which it was used, was a colonialist idea preparing the way for the amalgamation of parts of the Arab homeland with the colonialist countries so that their resistance to colonialism and amalgamation might be anaesthetised. Because they did not follow the scientific method they were incapable of seeing the humanism of Arab nationalism as being, from the start, directed against colonialism and exploitation in all their forms, so that its positive significance was constant solidarity with liberation movements

throughout the world. This nationalism is a link which forms part of the destiny of the human race in its struggle against exploitation in all its forms, whether political or social ; it is the link of love which unites humans in their struggle against nature and their attempt to dominate it. It was for this reason, and in this sense, that our Party said that “the nationalism we advocate is, above all, love. It is the emotion that binds the individual to his home and his family, because the homeland is a great home and the nation a vast family”. In saying this our Party was aware that the content of nationalism in Asia and Africa was something new; it was a historical development, “so that the new nationalism in these liberated Afro-Asian countries means a liberated socialist nationalism, believing in and unifying its people, believing in the peoples of the world, believing in international cooperation, believing in an independent, non-aggressive policy, renouncing aggression, renouncing colonialism, renouncing racialism, renouncing exploitation, renouncing enslavement”. Why ? Because the Afro-Asian countries are the victims of aggression, the victims of colonialism, the victims of racialism, the victims of exploitation, the victims of enslavement.

Our Party has been able, again for the first time, to show that what the Arab nation required is not only economic reforms or a political movement; what it also needed was a new spirit, a mentality that could restore the Arab nation's confidence in itself and its own potentials.

By looking thoroughly into the present our Party found out its weak points and indicated the true remedy for its maladies.

Our Party was not only a political movement; it was a movement embracing every aspect of civilisation that breathed new life into the nation, sparked off its potentials and inspired a spirit of revolt against everything that impeded its advance in the political, intellectual and social spheres. It was a struggle at all levels which addressed itself to the new generation, moving it to the very depths, so that it hastened impetuously to tear up outworn garments and spurious forms, "Retaining the unfettered view and the spirit of struggle . . . eliminating the self-interested view . . . rejuvenating the soul by a variety of means, by art and thought. . .".

It was also able, again for the first time, to deprive rightist rule of its most powerful weapon by forging a profoundly organic link between Arab nationalism and socialism and making it possible for the vast exploited masses to enter the battle and take over the direction of the destiny of the nation, making them understand that "deliverance will only come through the overwhelming majority of the members of our people, through the toiling, oppressed and exploited majority, not only because it is a majority, but because it is suffering from oppression, exploitation, loss of freedom and the wounding of its human and national dignity. Thus its circumstances, its situation and its strength have prepared it to be the motive power of history, to be the saviour of the nation,

to be the struggling vanguard and true image of the nation”.

Our Party realised that the nature of the battle required the utter repudiation of these traditional leaderships, because they distorted the historical movement of our nation and its nationalism, and because they “attributed to our nationalism their own attributes and their own spirit, the spirit of the class living in luxury and the spirit of the senile and decrepit class. At that time Arab nationalism and Arab struggle were in the hands of leaders who represented a past era and lacked the power to influence and the power to attract the masses of the people and the young, and the nationalist cause, which is a matter of life and death, was a level of extreme backwardness; it was intellectually worthless and bore no relation to the age in which we are living except as regards its repellent aspect, the aspect of arrogant nationalism, negative nationalism, which is aware of itself only when it is in conflict with others”. Therefore socialist thinking in our Party has never been “a matter of abstract ideas, nor of the general human tendency arising from an abstract feeling of compassion; it arose from the necessity — the very vital necessity — to save our nation from annihilation, for the battle of our nation with its colonisers and enemies was a battle to decide whether it should survive or be annihilated. Thus socialist thinking and the discovery of the role of the Arab labouring class at this historical stage was motivated by the necessity to ensure survival”.

Socialist thought in our Party is the result of a profound and true perception of the needs of the Arab battle against colonialism and reaction. Herein lies the distinction between the scientific method followed by our Party in its analysis of the situation and the passive acceptance of scientific theories that are no longer relevant of communism in our country. Resistance to colonialism crystallised the idea of a distinctive kind of class struggle in our country, because the feudal, bourgeois and bureaucratic classes were incapable of resisting colonialism and protecting our land and our nationalism from the colonialist assault. It was of the nature of the class struggle in our country that it did not take shape as the result of an acute division in society between a minority of capitalists and a class of workers. It emerged as the result of the inability of the effete feudal and bourgeois classes to lead in protecting the wealth of the country from the colonialist assault which smashed the old foundations and institutions of national production and did everything in its power to keep them smashed. Also from the inability of these classes to erect a new structure, which could rescue the vast masses from hunger and poverty and provide them with an opportunity to work and produce and to resolve the discrepancy between the rates of population growth and the growth of national production.

Our Party realised the qualitative characteristics of the class struggle in our country and in all the countries of Asia and Africa that had been subjected to colonialist

rule. It also realised that "it is not only the capitalists and feudalists who are the enemies of the Arab people, but the politicians who cling to fragmentation because it benefits them personally, and it is not only these politicians but also those who side with colonialism in one form or another, who are hostile to thought, science, development, openness of mind and tolerance and who resist or prevent the liberation of our nation".

Why should those who cling to fragmentation be the enemies of the people and be classified as the exploiting classes ? Because fragmentation is a reserve force of colonialism, because it involves smashing the front of the Arab masses and dividing anti-colonialist struggle.

Those who cling to and thrive on fragmentation, even though they profess to be socialist and progressive, are in practice against socialism, because it is impossible to establish socialism before colonialism and its influence in all forms have been finally eliminated. The Arab masses will never be capable of the serious and conclusive confrontation of colonialism unless the front of the battle against it is expanded. This can only be achieved if the struggle of the Arab masses in every region is unified in an organic unity of will, a unity of struggle and a unity of destiny. Therefore movements which have made socialism without unity one of their objectives are reformist movements incapable of resisting imperialism, and thereby the bourgeoisie and feudalism, and on the whole non-revolutionary movements which have not

offered a full and radical solution for the problems of Arab reality. This explains their fumbling and their inability to arouse the great masses in our homeland, because they renounce a fundamental principle of socialism — the unification of the struggle of the masses against imperialism.

Why, too, were those who oppose thought, science, development, openness and tolerance included in the class of enemies of the people and enemies of the masses? Because those who are opposed to science and development belong, in practice, in the ranks of colonialism, for we can only resist colonialism if we develop all our social, economic and intellectual institutions. To oppose development is to support colonialism in its battle with the Arab masses. Similarly, those who arouse and thrive on confessional tendencies are a dangerous weapon which colonialism can use to strike at the unity of the internal front of the masses. The Ba'th has classified them as the enemies of the people and the exploited class, even if they swear by all that is sacred to them that they are against colonialism, for it is not a question of good intentions, but of adopting practical attitudes and the consequences of doing so.

By using scientific method, the Party has also been able to make Arab unity and the potentials it sparks off known to the Arab masses. For "unity is a revolution which comes about to put an end to falsification, to change the situation and disclose the depths, and to

release imprisoned forces and sound views. We must not see unity as a process of passive merging, because it is not a unity of sound parts, nor is it the consequence of recent accidental fragmentation. It is something that is actively creative as between the parts and within each part, as a vital necessity for that part, before it is to be seen as a relationship between the parts for cooperation and solidarity. Unity does not deprive the part of its identity; it strengthens and consolidates that identity and makes it genuine, authentic and creative by setting the part in its living place as part of a whole. The potentials of the Arab nation are not a numerical total of the separate potentials of its parts; they are greater in quantity and different in kind". "Above all it (Arab unity) is struggle and unity in struggle." "And struggle is the true expression of the nation. In struggle we lay the foundations of our future life and in struggle the factors of decadence disappear, and in the serious atmosphere of struggle there is no more private interest, no more ignoble competition for material things, no more selfishness of any kind, because struggle builds a new standard which people must either attain or become ineffectual. And from a practical point of view the fragmentation of struggle is the greatest weapon in the hands of colonialism."

"There was nothing arbitrary or improvised in the way our Party linked unity to socialism; it saw that this was the only way to ensure that unity should be a living and dynamic reality in the life of the masses, something

that every worker asks for when he seeks his daily bread, something that every poor and oppressed peasant asks for when he seeks the restoration of his right to his produce and liberation from the yoke of injustice and enslavement. In this way we have made Arab unity a vital and real requirement which is part and parcel of the conditions of daily life of the individual members of the Arab people, and of the simplest aspect of their daily life — their material requirements.”

Unity “is not something mechanical achieved by political unification when conditions are favourable and opportunity offers, requiring no prior preparation except political preparation through negotiations and manoeuvring. In our view unity is a fundamental idea that has its own theory just as freedom and socialism have theirs, and like them it has its own constant daily organised struggle based on principles, and its practical stages which make the struggle stronger and pave the way to final victory”.

By employing this scientific method our Party has been able not only to define the objectives for the Arab masses; it has also defined the instrument through which the transformation is to be brought about. This instrument is the revolutionary Party in which the future of the one nation is realised: at this stage the Arab nation “requires a party, a movement which, above all, embodies the element of spirit . . . and life . . . so that it may later radiate therefrom upon the larger group . . . and the genuine party, the living party, which can

perform a mission in the present era of the Arab nation, is that which makes its objective the creation or the resurrection of a nation, as long as it first fulfils this condition in itself — meaning that it should be a miniature version of the pure, sound and advanced nation that it wants to resurrect”. On the whole it is the party of revolution, first within itself and then against the corrupt state of affairs that surrounds it. It is the party of the conscious vanguard that comprehends the situation and the march of history and that believes in progress and the inevitability of progress.

By employing this method our Party has also been able to discover that the only way to bring about this new resurrection and to lead to this radical transformation is revolution, revolution with all that it implies in the way of concomitant violence and struggle. For the corrupt state of affairs “is embodied in persons; it consists of the mentality of persons, their interests and their habits, persons who are used to their (privileged) position, cling on to it and defend it. This situation can only be combated by combating those who represent it and benefit from it. This revolutionary movement must shake all who surrender to the corrupt state of affairs, it must harass them so as to create in the nation a reaction to the disease when free thinking and sound morals are awakened, when a sound spirit is aroused. For revolution has only one true and clear meaning — it means struggle and opposition to prevailing mentality, morals and interests, and the rebirth of the nation is

the result of this struggle". "So there must be ferment, there must be a high standard, unsettled and moving, there must be hardships which we overcome, there must be a long march in which are combined thought, morals and faith, there must be trial and error on our part, and we must correct the errors, so that the nation may be unified on the road of struggle and hardship."

Only in this way can the masses be rightly guided and made conscious. Resounding speeches and fine sermons will not increase the consciousness of the masses, or give them back their self-confidence; it is struggle, events, reverses and victories that raise the masses to the level where they can control and promote the course of history.

By employing this scientific course our Party has become conscious of the present historical stage and embodied the aspirations of the masses in its historic slogans of unity, freedom and socialism.

If in the past the enemies of the Arab revolution have had doubts about these slogans and the extent to which they are realistic, they are unable to harbour such doubts today.

This inability, which is the result of the masses' fidelity to these slogans, as being an established reality, has led the enemy to change his tactics and his methods of attack. He now accepts these slogans, and even outbids them, but at the same time he makes every effort

to deprive them of their content and to attack the historical forces that crystallised them and embodied them, in practice, in their struggle. It is the duty of our Party today to expose these evil plans and cunning methods.

These historical slogans can only be implemented by the forces which first proposed them and implanted them in the minds of the masses, because it is they who are best able to comprehend and defend these slogans, since they constitute a fundamental condition of the life of these forces and a page in their history.

By adopting scientific method and firmly rejecting passive acceptance of scientific theories that are no longer relevant, and by drawing attention to the dangers of abstract thinking, our Party has been able to analyse the Arab state of affairs and discover the nature of its problems, and to formulate the proper solutions for these problems. History has proved, and is proving to-day, that this analysis is correct and capable of comprehending the problem. In its advance towards relentless struggle our Party's weapons are its scientific method and its conscious resoluteness.

However, our Party will not be able to surmount the difficulties and overcome the obstacles that lie ahead unless it practises a high morality which consists of choosing the truth and constant struggle on behalf of truth. Our Party will only be able to rise to this level if it evinces "a new mentality, a new spirit, new morals,

that are in no way connected to the corrupt state of affairs. It is not difficult to find signs and indications that can tell us whether this new structure, this nation in miniature, this Party, is really revolutionary or only revolutionary in name and title. These indications are that for it to be really revolutionary the Party itself, the morals of its members, their style of action and the methods used in the achievement of their objectives, should embody those virtues that they want to create in the coming society. The Party cannot possibly claim to be capable of creating a new and sound society if it resembles, harmonizes with and is akin to the present state of affairs which is corrupt and unsound. Just as we want our nation to be, in the near future, living, harmonious and free, liberated from all outworn considerations, in which the citizen occupies the position for which he is qualified by his capabilities, his morals and his loyalty, so the revolutionary Party must embody these qualities in its structure and in its path towards its objectives. If the revolutionary Party does not provide an opportunity for the hidden capacities of the nation to emerge, for every individual to occupy the position for which he is qualified by his ability, rather than by his name or the name of his family, by his loyalty rather than by his influence or adventitious external circumstances, if the Party cannot embody these virtues which it calls on the people to hold and which it tries to embody in the nation, from the moment it starts on the course of struggle, how can it possibly embody them later."

If our Party is not armed with solid morality, from being a revolutionary Party and a historical movement, it will become a mere gang, which will rapidly be invaded by contradiction, leading to a conflict of warring interests which will be smashed like a glass smelling of putrid personal interests and narrow egoisms.

Morality in struggle and devotion to the truth are the shield that protects our Party and saves it from splintering and annihilation.

The contradictions in our Party can only be resolved through positive interaction and mutual correction with the aim of unifying its energies and promoting its advance. The contradictions introduced into the Party by the backward state of affairs cannot be resolved by the same means as is used in struggle with the enemies of the Party and of the masses. Failure to distinguish between these two means is treason to our Party and to its historical task, and will lead to a lapse into deviationist policy and adventurist stunts. Our Party must be on its guard against this destructive opportunism and take a resolute stand against it, for it is a dangerous game, it is putting a match to tinder.

Only by employing these means can our Party confront the difficulties and surmount the obstacles that lie ahead, and prepare itself for the battles of destiny that will confront the Arab masses and their revolution.

The ideology of our Party is characterised by two fundamental qualities : it is scientific and it is revolutionary.

Our nationalist and socialist ideology is a scientific ideology, and it is the nature of the scientific mind to be always open to reality, to take advantage of all experiences and to reject ready made frameworks.

Only because it is scientific can this ideology rescue the masses from the mediaeval mentality which impedes their movement and hinders their creative and free advance. In Western Europe socialist struggle broke out in the context of struggle between the bourgeoisie and the working class. The bourgeoisie brought about a revolution, which was both economic and cultural, against feudalism, so that socialist struggle was based on enlightened and free intellectual traditions already achieved by the bourgeoisie. But in our Arab homeland the struggle is at once nationalist and socialist and is required to achieve three revolutions at once — a scientific revolution at the intellectual level, a revolution at the economic level to replace feudal and semi-capitalist

production relations by socialist relations, so as to establish a material base for a serious economic upsurge, and a revolution against fragmentation and its consequences at all levels. Thus the revolutionary movement in our fragmented and backward regions is required to achieve these three revolutions at the same time, and any change, however radical, in the economic field, will be incomplete and malformed if it is not accompanied by a scientific revolution at the intellectual and cultural levels and by unremitting struggle to achieve Arab unity. Socialism is not merely creating an economic situation that conforms with justice; it is also, and above all, a way of looking at man and society based on rational scientific principles, enshrining a belief in man's ability to determine his destiny, make his own laws and organise the affairs of society intelligently and freely. The fact that our Party's ideology is scientific will enable us to deal completely and radically with all aspects of backwardness in Arab cultural, social and economic life, and any attempt to ignore the cultural and social aspect of ideology will lead to the creation of a spurious and malformed society in which the economic aspect is progressing while the other aspects of Arab society remain stagnant, backward and rotten. Only the scientific mentality can make the contemporary Arab revolution a total revolution in which revolutionary transformation takes place at all levels and in all aspects of Arab life.

Only through relentless scientific criticism, and

profound and penetrating analysis of all aspects of present Arab society and its traditions, will it be possible to ensure the conditions that will make it possible to extirpate the negative, obstructive and restrictive aspects of this society. The destruction of the traditional frameworks of Arab society will speed up action to build a completely modern Arab society; if they are not destroyed the possibility of a well-ordered, rapid and radical growth in the social structure of the Arab people will be extremely doubtful, if not impossible, and at the same time the negative shadow it casts will obstruct serious and rapid economic growth.

The second characteristic of our Party's ideology is that it is revolutionary, because the starting point of socialist national and scientific thinking in social and economic analysis is dialectical logic, based on the affirmation that there is a contradiction in national society and a struggle between the classes, which struggle is characterised by endeavour to achieve two objectives at the same time: Arab national unity and the elimination of exploitation. This contradiction will not be resolved spontaneously, nor will it be ended by the good will of a group of well-intentioned reformers, nor by accumulating partial reforms within the framework of the present society against which we are struggling.

The change-over from one social system to another (especially in backward countries) must not be achieved gradually, but through a bold stroke which brings about

a qualitative change in the state of affairs, destroying the outworn economic foundation of society and the political, legal, social and cultural structures.

The ideology of our Party unhesitatingly and resolutely rejects opportunist reformist views which advocate long and slow gradualism in social change, because the accumulation of partial and secondary reforms cannot possibly lead, in practice, to a total transformation of the framework of present Arab society and its economic, social and cultural content. Moreover, the reformist trend has a negative effect on the structure of our revolutionary Party and leads to its being gradually acclimatised to the traditional framework of contemporary society, and eventually surrendering to it.

Although in Western Europe there were certain objective circumstances that paved the way for the reformist socialist trend, in backward countries in general, and in the Arab homeland in particular, there is no objective justification for such a trend. Therefore the only explanation of such a trend in the socialist movement in the Arab homeland is that the conservative and opportunist mentality has infiltrated the revolutionary socialist trend and is trying to liquidate it from within.

A revolutionary ideology is the only natural solution of the problems of a backward country and in our world of today, where the gap between backward and advanced

countries is widening, the revolution of the backward countries will come about as the result of the contradiction between the traditional structure of those societies and the great growth of the economies of the advanced countries, to which the backward countries are attached by links of dependence and subjection, in addition to the internal contradictions which beset backward societies. An unambiguously revolutionary ideology alone can change the old system in which the Arab people are imprisoned, and consequently destroy the institutions, bases and frameworks of that system, and create completely new social, economic and cultural structures in Arab society.

ARAB UNITY

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The Party arose in circumstances where the traditional concept of Arab nationalism prevailed, and the call of Arab nationalism and unity was often used by the traditional political organisations as a demagogic instrument to mislead the masses with the object of perpetuating both fragmentation and backwardness.

The Arab Ba'ith Socialist Party was the first movement in the Arab homeland that really recognised the essence of the Arab cause and set it in its historical and revolutionary context :

a — In the first stage of its struggle the Party affirmed the priority of Arab unity and gave it preponderance and moral precedence over socialism and freedom, considering that it was both erroneous and injurious to view or deal with the vital problems of the Arabs, both individually and as a whole, on any other basis than that of the axiom of "the unity of the Arab nation". The Party has always stressed that the idea of Arab unity must always accompany and direct the struggle of the Arab people for freedom and socialism.

The Party's insistence on the priority of unity was, from an objective point of view, a profound and admirable expression of the interests of the masses in particular and those of the Arab people in general, because the course of events and of development have proved that hopes of unity express, within a true historical horizon, the masses' need for liberation.

b — The Party was the first to give Arab unity its true revolutionary content, seeing it as an important factor in making all real change in Arab society more profound, because the freedom for which every Arab region is striving for individually cannot be as profound, comprehensive and positively significant as that achieved by the Arab nation as a unit. Similarly, the material basis of socialism can only be made fully effective when its field is the whole Arab nation as an economic and human unity.

c — The Party was the first movement in the Arab homeland to link nationalist struggle to socialist struggle and to affirm that they were inseparable. It was this that transformed the struggle of the Arab nationalist from a mere traditional bourgeois slogan into popular mass struggle. The practical result of this linking was that the call for Arab unity was turned into a sweeping mass movement and, thanks to this, unity was no longer a mere dream only, but became a real and living reality embodied by the masses in their day by day struggle. Thus nationalist struggle and socialist struggle followed their

course inseparably attached to each other, each giving the other its energies and its impetus, each opening up to the other its wide horizons and its profound scope.

The Party brought the call of Arab nationalism down from the sky of the aristocracy to the ground of the masses. It was thus transformed into a motive force that made the Arab people experience the problem of unity in their daily life, and became a basic moving force in the struggle of the Arab millions.

d — The Party was not content with presenting these themes as mere theory; they became the practical content of its policy and the incentive of its struggle. The Party was thus organised at the level of the Arab homeland, as an embodiment of its idea that Arab countries are an indivisible unit, and it regarded unified and organised Arab action as the only serious solution of the problems of the Arab nation. Thus from the start the Party has been the historical movement that made its point of departure an authentic concept of Arabism involving the absolute rejection of regionalism, and its day by day struggle has been a strict and radical rejection of regionalism at both the theoretical and the practical levels.

These are the positive aspects of the Party's basic principles as regards the issue of unity. However, these basic principles also have negative aspects.

a — In general the Party was stating the problem of achieving unity correctly when it maintained that unity of struggle is the road to unity.

Unity of struggle does indeed liquidate feelings of isolation and fragmentation, but it is not the objective instrument for the establishment of unity nor an adequate means of ensuring its safety and continuity.

The Party has always affirmed that Arab unity is not a mere agglomeration or coming together of the parts of the Arab homeland, but a cohesion and then fusion of those parts. Therefore unity is a revolution, with all the dimensions, meanings and levels implied by the word revolution; it is a revolution because it involves the elimination of regional interests that have lived, expanded and left their residues throughout the centuries. It is also a revolution because it confronts interests and classes that are opposed to and resist unity; also because unity is a revolution it must have its objective instruments, which are the vanguard popular revolutionary movements. However, the Party has never formulated theoretical guidelines showing the way to unity and indicating how it is to be achieved, and

what safeguards are necessary for its protection and development. The effect of this was to be seen in the weakness of the theoretical and practical bases of the 1958 union, as a result of which there were inadequate safeguards for its protection against decline and collapse. The effects of this inadequacy also explain, to a great extent, the shock sustained by the Party in all regions, and in the Syrian region in particular, and the deviation or retrogression which led some people to doubt the very principle of unity.

b — The fact that the Party came into existence in disturbed historical conditions did much to determine the form of the slogans it employed at specific stages and its mode of political action. To transform unity from a dream, anaesthetising the masses' will to revolt, into a national goal stimulating their day by day struggle, it was necessary that, in the first stages of its struggle, which may be called the stage of making the masses nationally conscious, the Party should constantly concentrate on unity and stress its fundamental importance for the support of any other mass requirement. This led the Party to adopt attitudes which can, indeed, constitute a useful weapon if seen in the context of the circumstances in which they were adopted, but such concentration will become deviation, and endanger the cause of unity itself if it is seen as something absolute. In fact these negative circumstances and this distorted and backward situation lasted a long time, making attitudes adopted in the light of the circumstances of a

particular stage part of the Party heritage which set its imprint on the thinking of the Party bases and the leadership itself, and turned passive receptivity to influences into a point of departure.

The fact that no complete theory was laid down for the Party at the start of its struggle and that it relied on experience to complement its theory and make it more profound, did indeed save the Party from ideological rigidity and intellectual petrification. But at the same time it left the Party open to a passive receptivity to influences undefined and undisciplined by theory. As a result of the successive battles it had to fight, in many cases the Party did no more than react to the events that confronted popular struggle, and although its sound nationalist principle and its belief that the economic, social and political situations were inseparable ensured that these reactions did not take the form of deviation, exclusive reliance on this view is no good when the battle, from being a battle of confrontation with the enemies of the nationalist and socialist cause, becomes a matter of translating principles into reality at the stage of construction.

c — From the start the nationalist struggle of the Arab people has been faced with two challenges which, though deriving from mutually contradictory standpoints, agree in their hostility to Arab struggle. One is the colonialist reactionary challenge which has striven to perpetuate fragmentation by provoking and entrenching

social, political and economic contradictions and by striking at the revolutionary movements which are the only objective instruments for the achievement of unity. The other is the challenge of local communism which does, indeed, oppose colonialism, but agrees with it in combating unity and nationalist sentiment, even though its hostility took a different form from those of colonialism and its agents, the reactionaries. The ferocious hostility to the nationalist trend evinced by the local communist movement in all its attitudes, both practical and theoretical, led the Party to regard the nationalist trend as something practically sacred. For this challenge was extremely grave, especially as it came at a time when reaction had distorted the nationalist trend and made it a screen for its own objectives. The Party succeeded in making the nationalist trend the basic political force in the present Arab battle and the common denominator of all the parties and groups active in the Arab field, although for many of these the nationalist façade was no more than a misleading screen, the success achieved by the Party did have certain negative effects resulting from the ferocity of the battle and the character of its enemies; in some of its writings the Party presented an idealist concept of Arab nationalism which was open to an interpretation that was sometimes incompatible with both science and the development of history, so that for some party members, Arab nationalism became a petrified and frozen concept.

This is why, in some of the writings of that stage,

which were characterised by antagonism to the deviation of the local communist movement and by mere passivity, the socialist cause was regarded as a branch of the nationalist cause; in the case of some people this obscured the reality of class struggle as having a true significance for and constituting a basic fighting principle of Arab nationalism.

If the writings, relevant to a specific stage, by which the Party confronted the local communist movement's hostility to the nationalist trend, are seen as expressing a constant attitude and a theoretical principle, the Party may be induced to take the position of arbitrator and mediator between the classes. Although such an attitude was reasonable in the first stages of nationalist struggle and could be justified under the circumstances prevailing at the time, it has no justification whatsoever at the stage of socialist construction which the Party has now reached. Thus, should this attitude continue and become firmly entrenched, there is a danger of the Party being frozen in middle of the road attitudes and its socialist impetus being paralysed.

— 3 —

Arab unity is not a theorem requiring proof; it is a reality that stirs the profoundest feelings of the Arab masses from the (Arab) Gulf to the (Atlantic) Ocean.

— 35 —

The important thing now is to define the social content of the Arab nationalist movement, then that of Arab unity, as being the practical “framework” of Arab nationalism.

The actual development of Arab struggle has affirmed the socialist, popular and revolutionary character of the fight for Arab unity :

a — Arab nationalist struggle clashed with colonialism as having created fragmentation and being anxious to maintain and perpetuate it as a means of maintaining its influence and its monopolies in the Arab homeland.

b — Arab nationalist struggle clashed with feudalism as being at once an obsolete mode of production and a political class, inasmuch as the feudal class is the one that is directly and openly the agent of colonialism.

c — Arab nationalist struggle clashed with the national bourgeoisie, in view of the fact that the bourgeoisie of each region had grown up independently of and in isolation from those of the other regions, and that each of the regional bourgeoisies had turned the contradictions between themselves into inter-regional contradictions between one region and another. For this reason the struggle of the Arab nationalist movement found itself obliged to remove bourgeois obstacles

as a means of transcending regional frontiers and creating its national unity.

For all these reasons the movement of Arab nationalism is the cause of the masses of the workers and peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the revolutionary intellectuals, so that the course of Arab nationalism has become the Arabs' course towards socialism.

This is why Arab unity comes today within a true historical horizon, and expresses the need of the masses for liberation and their desire that their forces should be set fully in motion to smash the obstacles that lie in the course of their advance.

Because the process of the actual development of the nationalist movement has followed these new historical courses, the promotion of the movement of Arab unity requires resort to objective factors to build the foundations and outline the framework of this unity. Subjective and emotional factors are no longer capable of building a unity that can confront imperialism as a whole and at the same time confront those internal class enemies whom unity deprives of their privileged positions, their influence and their supremacy.

The achievement of unity between regions in which fragmentation has left residues of backwardness and narrow interests is a colossal task, necessarily determined by commitment to ideology at the social, political and

economic levels. This ideology must both honestly express the interests of the masses and depend on them as an organisation. To ensure that unity enjoys the objective conditions required for a genuine new start, it must derive from masses who are conscious and politically formed, responsible and firmly organised; inasmuch as the spirit of democracy is belief in the masses, unionist struggle is necessarily democratic socialist struggle.

Comprehensive Arab unity is a revolutionary mass objective that must be realised in a conscious and sound manner. Unity must therefore be embodied in a democratic form, in the form of a scientific socialist trend, and of positive and effective participation by the organised masses.

In these new circumstances Arab unity is no longer merely a practical embodiment of the national unity of the people; it is also a driving force of Arab struggle at both the political and the social levels.

1 — The desired Arab state will not resemble the traditional national states established on a purely national basis; regional bourgeois interests, in addition to feudalism and the monopolist classes, are now the enemies of unity, so that unionist struggle by the masses, by being obliged to remove these regionalist obstacles, creates socialism at the same time as it creates unity.

2 — Arab unity is no longer the realisation of a

bygone past; it is an immediate necessity in the battle for Arab existence against colonialism in its old and new forms and against Israel. The only way to recover the usurped parts of the Arab homeland, to destroy colonialist monopolies and to close the door to neo-colonialism once and for all, is unionist struggle.

Fragmentation and backwardness provide the natural atmosphere in which neo-colonialism thrives. The contradiction and competition that are bound to exist between small artificial political entities make it easy for neo-colonialism to infiltrate. Moreover, the policy of small states, however much they have been liberated, is always to a great extent merely a negative rejection of colonialist policy, and their cooperation with the socialist states is impaired by a sort of concealed fear of colonialism and a sort of complex vis-à-vis the socialist camp itself. Therefore the unitary state, which must of necessity be a large one, will be able to transform Arab policy, from being merely negative and defensive rejection of colonialism, into the exercise of a policy at international level that is based on revolutionary principles, regardless of the repercussions of such a policy on the international camps. The weight, both quantitative and qualitative, of the large unified Arab state will provide it with sufficient strength to strike just and legitimate revolutionary blows at the surviving positions of old colonialism, its monopolies and its agent Israel, and this will close the door, once and for all, to infiltration by neo-colonialism.

3 — Unity will provide serious opportunities for a rapid upsurge of the Arab economy. Regional frontiers have been a basic factor in curbing contemporary economic development, for marketing is the converse of industrialisation, and the fact that regional markets are so restricted is an important factor in impeding Arab economic development and preventing it from achieving its full potential; these frontiers are practically leading to the economic strangulation of the smaller Arab regions. The economic aspect of Arab unity provides the objective conditions for the establishment of an economy of major dimensions and the setting up of major, advanced and modern industries, strong and efficient enough to stand up to foreign competition without the customs barriers required to protect small, backward and uneconomic industries. In addition to all this, the existing economic complementarity in our Arab homeland will provide an incentive for the rapid development of the Arab economy as a whole. The great and varied natural resources available in the Arab homeland will provide the objective conditions for an escape from subservience to the colonialist countries, because the decisive issue in economic development is not that of investment only, but of marketing and exchange. Arab unity will also eliminate competition and rivalry in the search for sources of foreign financing, eliminate unreasonable duplication of expenditure on similar projects and, finally, eliminate the unequal distribution of national resources and labour force as between the different regions of the Arab homeland.

For all these reasons unity means not only national salvation; it also means economic and social salvation, the elimination of backwardness and rapid advance to catch up with the march of history.

4 — Socialism is the real content of Arab unity, and the building of socialism makes unity the human and economic framework which is most consistent with the requirements of an all-embracing and radical socialist experience. Small countries cannot set out on the road of socialism on their own, because economic development (and industrialisation in particular which sets the material base of socialism) will always be threatened with stagnation and strangulation. Therefore Arab unity and socialism are inseparable at both the historical and the economic levels.

5 — The objective evolution of our present world is advancing rapidly towards large groupings of peoples; many states have been created on a multi-national basis, and political and economic groupings have started to crystallise as the first step towards deeper, more solid and stronger links, like the European Union and the European Common Market, the socialist camp and the bloc of African states. The attempt to tighten neo-colonialist control of the backward countries, at a time when old colonialism is declining and collapsing, and when large international political and economic groupings are arising, makes Arab unity a weapon for the defence of the interests of the Arab people.

Thus, in addition to being an embodiment of Arab nationalism, Arab unity is in line with the objective development of our contemporary world. It is a fundamental necessity for the confrontation of the new dangers; it is also the natural basis for the development of science and technique in the Arab homeland and for catching up with sweeping world development in this field.

Arab unity is an indispensable basis for the establishment of a socialist society to confront the challenge of the new age — the age of the new industrial revolution — and the perils of neo-colonialism.

6 — The Arabs are one nation. Therefore Arab unity must be a complete unity in the later stages of unionist struggle. The classical form of federation may be appropriate to the multi-national state, and may be merely a stage and a step towards full unity, because federation, if it is the final stage of unionist advance, is a form which maintains the regional residues that are in line with bourgeois interests and bourgeois thinking. For unity to be real and complete it must have strong and effective leadership in the political, military, economic and cultural fields.

However, the popular content of unity requires the application of decentralisation (or autonomy) in government, this being the practical application of socialist democracy. Decentralisation in regional and local affairs

is a democratic necessity, but need not necessarily be based on the present map of the Arab countries, nor need this map be taken as a basic principle or a basis for the application of decentralisation. For the existing political entities have not always existed, nor are they natural; they are spurious, artificial and recent. The new framework for decentralised government will be determined in conformity with the conditions of production and the requirements of economic and social construction, so that it may be in harmony with the real and concrete interests of the masses of the Arab people.

7 — For a genuine new start to be made on the basis of objective conditions, the concrete reality of the Arab situation must be affirmed ; it must not be sidetracked and ignored. Long fragmentation has created varied regional conditions and lack of uniformity in economic development which are reflected in other aspects of life, in the political, social and cultural situation. Unionist construction must assimilate these conditions from the start, so that it may be able to overcome them and liquidate them in a gradual, balanced and sure manner through interaction between regions, for this is the only practical way of ensuring fusion.

8 — Unity, in its democratic and revolutionary sense, must come as the culmination of Arab revolutionary struggle and as the fruit of economic, social and political interaction between the various Arab rev-

olutionary experiences, because to substitute expansionism for interaction and to dissolve authentic revolutionary experiences leads in practice to regional contradictions being aggravated and being manifested in the form of antagonism. This also furnishes the conditions for secessionist retrogression, as happened in Syria on September 28, 1961. This is even worse than fragmentation, because fragmentation is a sick state of affairs which is inherited, while secessionism is a step backwards, and negative steps and regionalist retrogressions have a great influence which is more dangerous than that of corrupt stagnation.

9 — The socialist democratic character of the foundations of unity must be reinforced; this is essential to ensure that its structure is firmly established. The popular masses alone are untouched by regionalist residues, by their concomitant circumstances and the interests that give rise to them. The workers and peasants will lose nothing by the elimination of frontiers, whereas the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy will lose their real positions when the frontiers disappear. Regionalist fanaticism is a way of defending regional interests that are destroyed by unity, and Arab unity, in its concrete development, is both a nationalist and a socialist democratic revolution.

10 — The organised revolutionary forces of the masses are the objective instruments which create, protect and entrench unity. Therefore the best and most

firmly established form of unity is that which is the fruit of revolutionary mass struggle led by unified revolutionary forces, because the organic unity of the vanguard forces makes them better qualified to and more capable of adopting a unified and consistent attitude to the residues of fragmentation and to all other problems. However, objective conditions in the Arab homeland have created numerous progressive or revolutionary movements, and although all of them have a similar basic line, their characteristics and social composition, their different ideological levels and the residues left in them by fragmentation and regionalism create certain differences in their views of the problems of nationalist socialist struggle. However these differences do not lead to antagonism between them; it is a question of determining the limits between right and wrong.

The meeting of and interaction between the nationalist forces will eventually lead to the fusion of these forces on foundations that science and experience in struggle have proved to be the right ones. For the achievement of unity is conditional on the unification of the basic theoretical principles on which it is to be built and on the unity of the methods of struggle that lead to its achievement. However, unification on the basis of imposing a preconceived framework derived from a single region leads, in practice, to the sabotaging of all real possibility of fusing the mass revolutionary forces. Inasmuch as unity will come about as the result of the meeting of these forces, this

meeting must be on a democratic basis, on the basis of interaction, not compulsion, on the basis of eliminating partial and secondary differences through mutual criticism and self-criticism, mutual supervision and exchange of experiences. All attempts to build these relations on an undemocratic basis, on a basis of compulsion and annexation, will result not only in these partial differences developing into hostility between the different movements, but also in the course of unity being impeded and the liberated anti-imperialist Arab ranks being divided.

11 — Arab unity will be achieved by stages, and this advance by stages towards the achievement of unity will not constitute a danger to comprehensive unity as long as it arises from certain objective conditions attendant on Arab struggle and is not an expression of semi-secessionist and semi-regionalist theories. Partial unity can indeed be a danger to the nationalist cause when it is a substitute for comprehensive national unity, but it is a sound unionist step when it is merely a step along the road to comprehensive unity, securing the fusion of the revolutionary energies of two or more regions and paving the way for the creation of new conditions that will contribute to the achievement of further unionist steps.

FREEDOM

THE EXERCISE OF POPULAR DEMOCRACY

— 1 —

The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party arose at a time when the most prominent feature of the Arab and international situation was the violent repression and intense falsification of freedom.

Direct traditional colonialism still occupied most of the regions of our Arab homeland, crushing the freedom of the people to protect its positions, safeguard its interests and maintain its influence.

In the Arab countries that achieved traditional independence, reaction inherited some of the positions of colonialism and deprived the masses of the fruits of their struggle; it used power as a means of exploiting the popular masses and allied itself with colonialism so that each might ensure that the other's influence was maintained and its interests protected. Sometimes, when the struggle of the masses became acute, reaction was forced to conduct an open and direct reign of terror, while at other times it falsified the slogans of democratic

freedom and robbed them of their true significance, so that the democracy of reaction became a mere façade to conceal the tyranny, falsification and exploitation of the reactionary classes.

At the same time socialist experiments were experiencing a concrete and intense aggravation of the dangers of bureaucracy; socialist legality was degraded and in most of the countries of the socialist camp socialist democracy became a mere mummy concealing bloody and autocratic tyranny.

To confront this situation on a basis of revolutionary principle, the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party launched the slogan of freedom as a true and honest response of the attitude of a Party that believed in socialism as a means for the total and radical liberation of the Arab individual.

To the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party freedom meant first total political and economic liberation from all kinds of colonialist domination. This is why the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party was the first Arab revolutionary movement to place the question of struggle against colonialism on a revolutionary level and on the level of principle. This is also why the Party embarked on permanent relentless struggle against all kinds of colonialist domination. In the Arab regions where the Party was deeply rooted and where its mass forces had grown strong, the Party's struggle was a basic factor in threatening and undermining all forms of colonialist domination, politi-

cal or economic, direct or indirect. At the same time the Party's socialist standpoint made it the first all-Arab revolutionary movement to appreciate how deeply rooted was colonialist influence in the character of the reactionary classes, and to combat them strongly and resolutely.

The Party's socialist principles and its commitment to the interests of the popular masses enabled it to play an effective role in showing how the reactionary classes had falsified freedom and how distorted and fraudulent was the democracy applied by the bourgeoisie. It was not only that objective conditions in the Arab homeland prevented the establishment of a firm and true basis for the serious and constant exercise of democracy within its bourgeois framework; because of the socialist character of its struggle the Party played a part in exposing the feudal-bourgeois concept of freedom, even though it did not formulate a new theoretical basis for a clearly defined and concrete concept of freedom and democracy within their socialist framework.

The humanist character of the Party's socialism has always been prominent and conspicuous, because the enslavement of man in the regimes of exploitation is the gravest form of the loss of human liberty. Therefore, only through the overthrow and liquidation of the regimes of exploitation will it be possible to create the objective conditions for man being liberated and delivered from alienation and exploitation. This is why the Party has always condemned all kinds of violation

of socialist legality, the restriction of the freedom of the popular masses and their domination by bureaucracy, which certain revolutionary socialist experiences in the world have suffered from. This is why the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party has always affirmed that freedom is inseparable from social justice, because this is the only way to reinforce the humanist content of socialism and to make it the firm material foundation for the growth of human freedom.

The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party has set the question of the struggle against colonialism in its international and humanist context, regarding the socialist camp as a positive and effective force in the struggle against colonialism. The political and theoretical subservience of the local communists, their dogmatism and their hostility to the Arab nationalist trend and to Arab unity, and the errors of principles and tactics which the USSR has often committed, and still commits, have neither concealed from the Arab Ba'th Socialist Party the fact that it is in profound agreement with the basic principles of the policy of the socialist camp, nor changed the Party's independent attitude vis-à-vis that camp, and its criticism of its mistakes, into hostility to it. The Party was the first to propose the slogan of positive neutrality as a general line for Arab foreign policy, and has always affirmed the principle of "non-commitment" to any of the international camps. Fundamentally, in fact, this slogan meant resolute struggle against colonialism on a basis of revolutionary principles. The Party

has not placed the two camps on the same footing, because the horizon of struggle of a colonised or semi-colonised people and of a homeland sapped and exploited by colonialism means that the basic principles applied by the socialist camp are more in harmony with the interests of our Arab homeland and more sympathetic to our Arab people.

In its immediate sense the policy of non-commitment prescribed by the Party meant avoiding subservience and involvement in the day to day, direct and bilateral conflicts of the two camps. But it also meant commitment, at the international level, to a policy of revolutionary principle based on support for the national liberation movements of all peoples struggling against colonialism.

— 2 —

The Party's basic principles as regards the understanding of political freedom have been correct in their general outlines, though it has never tried to give a full and concrete clarification of their social and class meaning. The Party's attitude has been to reject all the forms of distortion and repression of freedom to which the Arab man in particular and man in general have been subjected.

The Party has condemned the dictatorship both of the individual and of the bureaucracy. However, it has

not clearly defined its view, in the light of its principles, of bourgeois parliamentary democracy. Nor has it provided the theoretical framework of the problem of freedom in its concrete reality by linking it to the revolutionary stage in which our Arab people are living and to the revolutionary classes of Arab society. Finally, it has not shown the way to a model on the basis of which a government that is at once radically revolutionary and popular-democratic, can be built.

Because the Party has restricted itself to laying down foundations and main outlines as regards standpoint on the problem of political freedom, there has been some obscurity in its day by day struggle in certain circumstances, because it has not passed definitive judgement on bourgeois liberal concepts of political freedom.

The Party has taken action at the level of the military sector and at parliamentary level, but without a conscious plan of struggle.

a — As regards the military sector the Party has taken action to activate it in a number of Arab regions and made persistent efforts to transform it from a professional sector activated by the reactionary government into a revolutionary sector interlinked with the Arab masses in their struggle against colonialism, fragmentation and exploitation.

In the first stages of the Party's struggle in this sector, it succeeded in mobilising it for the struggle

against colonialism. But it was not able to transform it completely into a revolutionary instrument in the hands of the masses from the start, because in the first stages of its struggle it failed to make the revolutionary elements in that sector an organic part of the structure of the Party. For this reason the Party's struggle in this field achieved only partial results. But this struggle did have positive results, if seen from the point of view of the historical development of popular struggle. It has helped to exhaust the reactionary classes and to show up the fraudulence of the reactionary democratic regimes; it has also played a decisive role in repelling colonialist attacks on the independence of some of the Arab regions.

The Party could have followed a fully revolutionary plan in this sector if it had, from the first stages, employed the conscious revolutionary tactics that sparked off the glorious February 8 revolution in the Iraqi Region, and if it had regarded the problem of revolution as being, fundamentally and continuously, the problem of organising the masses, realising that the role of this sector was to be just one of the fronts of revolutionary action, merely complementing the basic struggle, of which the popular masses must always be the base and the foundation. Such a mature revolutionary line alone can firmly implant the roots of revolution and make more profound the socialist significance of any event in which revolutionary military elements emerge as a principal element in the immediate battle.

All this explains the failure to transform the military sector into a revolutionary instrument before the February 8 revolution. It also explains the reverses suffered by attempted military coups and the fact that certain military men joined the ranks of opportunism and reaction. In the present backward political and social conditions of our homeland there is a possibility of bureaucratic degeneration and a new class being formed over the popular masses, if the military sector is not organically attached to the Party, if the organisation of this sector does not embrace the masses of the soldiers, non-commissioned officers and officers, and if the masses of the workers and peasants are not seriously and consciously organised.

The Party demonstrated its genuinely revolutionary character by applying itself to revolutionary activity in the military sector, both because the profound general crisis in which our people are involved is bound to affect this sector, and because revolutionary action requires the activation of all forces to ensure the victory of the nationalist and socialist causes. However, this revolutionary spirit was to a great extent spontaneous and unorganised; both full consciousness of the character and circumstances of this sector and the objective delimitation of the basic forces of revolution were required.

b — Although the Party's basic principles were revolutionary in their view of social transformation yet, in the regions where, from time to time, the political

atmosphere was favourable to the establishment of a parliamentary façade, from time to time the Party did play the “parliamentary game” in a way suggesting that it accepted the parliamentary system, in its bourgeois liberal sense, as a permanent and adequate framework for struggle and political action. Although the revolutionary character of the Party made it doubt the efficacy of bourgeois parliaments as a way to socialist transformation, in certain periods it almost became absorbed in the field of parliamentary action and almost forgot the basic issue—the issue of mass organisation. In this it was side-tracking the objective conditions of the Arab homeland, which make it clear that the “parliamentary system” in its bourgeois liberal sense, cannot be an instrument of radical social transformation, and that it is a merely formal façade to conceal the influence of feudalism and the higher bourgeoisie.

Mass struggle is the only course of revolution, and parliamentary struggle can only be one of the forms of revolutionary struggle, with the object of strengthening and deepening the links with the masses and exposing the policy of the reactionary classes and the way they have completely falsified democracy.

The fact that some branches of the Party have, at times, lapsed into adopting the parliamentary system, has led to their trying to win elections in a traditional way, which involved descending to the inertia and the weak points of the masses and becoming involved in

their trivial day to day individual problems. This situation also had undesirable repercussions on the structure of the Party in these branches and on its plans of action.

— 3 —

a — The greater part of the Arab homeland is, to varying degrees, still subject to the influence of colonialism in its old and new forms.

Although in the course of the historical development of people's struggle, including our Arab people, extensive victories have been won against colonialism, it is still conspiring and manoeuvring to impede the liberation of peoples and to maintain its positions, monopolies and other forms of influence.

The escalation and expansion of the struggle of peoples is, from day to day, forcing world colonialism to liquidate the partial contradictions between its parties and to adopt different, more flexible and aware methods. The feudal classes and the upper layers of the monopolist bourgeoisie were the allies of old colonialism; the bourgeoisie and the bureaucracy are the allies of neo-colonialism and are collaborating with it in exploiting the masses of the people. The economic backwardness from which our homeland is suffering, along

with the political leadership of the bureaucracy and the bourgeoisie, will strengthen and maintain the influence of neo-colonialism. Therefore, only a government representing the interests of the popular masses is capable of halting infiltration by neo-colonialism and of liquidating its interests.

Exploitation of the difficulties of economic construction in our homeland, allying themselves with the exploiting and parasitic classes, consolidating their domination of the process of economic advance, and encouraging private enterprise and the private sector, are the new methods adopted by the colonialist countries to maintain their real control in new forms. It is therefore a delusion to believe that the construction of a new socialist society, which regards the interests of the masses as its first concern, can be achieved without constant relentless struggle against the phenomenon of colonialism. On this basis it seems illogical to depend on foreign aid except as an additional and secondary factor in the economic development of our homeland. Only by enlisting the material and human resources of the Arab people and adopting scientific method in planning and socialist transformation can the harmonious and serious development of the Arab economy be ensured.

Only a foreign policy based on revolutionary principles and deriving from the socialist concept that all kinds of exploitation, whether inside or outside the Arab homeland, must be rejected, a policy based on confidence in

the strength of the Arab masses, can enable the Arab people to find, at international level, firm allies for the cause of the Arab struggle against colonialism. Greater solidarity and stronger links with those countries of the Third World — to which we belong — that follow the policy of positive neutrality (in different ways, according to their systems of government and the extent of their economic independence) will certainly help to strengthen the front of battle against colonialism.

Similarly, stronger and closer friendship between the Arab people and all states whose interests are in line with the aspirations of the Arab people to liberation from the heritage of colonialism will create a genuine prospect of extirpating the strategic positions and monopolist and colonialist interests in the Arab homeland and help to reinforce the common human struggle against colonialism.

If the liberation of Palestine is basically conditional on the unity and growth of Arab progressive forces, a policy based on principle, flexible and revolutionary, is what is required to induce the progressive forces of the world to support the cause of the Arab people of Palestine, so that it may be possible to liquidate this problem with as little direct reaction as possible from colonialism which created Israel and is now supplying it with all it needs to survive and be powerful.

The Arab nationalist movement, as the movement of an oppressed people, must always regard itself as an

inseparable part of the struggle of all peoples against colonialism. Therefore the Arab people are always activated by a resolute will to play a positive and effective part in combating colonialism in all its forms in all parts of the world, and will provide aid to all peoples struggling against colonialism.

b — Freedom, in its political form, has never been an abstract and absolute concept; even the bourgeois concept of freedom has never been that. It is always a freedom which is concrete and has a clearly defined social content, granted to one class and withheld, in one form or another, from other classes. When the bourgeoisie started its revolution against feudalism, it called for an ideal absolute freedom for the whole people. But when it came to power, freedom reverted to a particular class. The bourgeoisie did not hesitate, by crushing its idealism, to exploit the democratic state and to strike at the masses when its interests were endangered. The bourgeoisie turned absolute freedom, or so-called human rights, into a class interest. Democracy, in its present form in Western Europe, was not a gift from the bourgeoisie to the popular masses; it was the fruit of long and stubborn mass struggle.

c — The parliamentary system in Western Europe arose with the rise and growth of the bourgeoisie and was, consequently, the political envelope of the bourgeois economic system. At first parliaments represented only the owning classes, but with the growth of the labour

movement and as a result of its long political struggle, suffrage was extended until it became universal, and the influence in parliament of the masses increased. However, the changes that took place in the structure of the capitalist countries led to real power being restricted to the administrative, economic and military institutions of the state. Thus universal suffrage was unable to express the will of the masses or to realise their aims because the bourgeoisie, which enjoys real and effective privileges, succeeded in making parliamentary activity the servant of capitalist economy. The entry of the working class into the parliaments of Western Europe did not lead to the overthrow of the power of the bourgeoisie; it only obliged it to adopt new forms and methods that were more flexible and showed a greater understanding of the requirements of the actual situation, so that certain labour demands were absorbed, the revolutionary struggle of the masses cooled off and the bourgeoisie remained in power.

The parliamentary system started to decline, and its crisis grew acute with the victory of the socialist revolution in the USSR and the establishment of Fascist systems of government between the two world wars, the victory of the nationalist revolutions in Asia and the entry of the industrial capitalist countries into the era of the new industrial revolution.

d — Inasmuch as the parliamentary system is the way of government of the Western bourgeoisie and part

of the superstructure of Western societies, to apply the parliamentary system in certain Arab regions was merely to import a Western façade cut off from its political and economic roots; it was not engendered by the requirements and immediate practical needs of the nationalist socialist movement.

Arab societies are not purely bourgeois; they are semi-feudal-tribal-bourgeois societies. Therefore in our homeland the parliamentary system has never been more than a bad copy of the Western parliamentary system, unable either to confront the tasks of nationalist-socialist struggle or to take root in political life.

Military coups have come to be inseparable from this system in our homeland; they are at once its penalty and the proof of its failure. In our homeland the parliamentary system has reflected the backward, semi-feudal, tribal and confessional social situation, and through the contradiction between the aspirations of the masses and the reactionary and backward reality of the parliamentary system, and as a spontaneous and negative reflection of the anger of the masses, military coups have taken place and spells of parliamentary democracy have alternated with military coups, each bearing the seeds of the other's downfall.

For all these reasons the failure and fall of the parliamentary system in the Arab regions was not only the result of bad application by bad groups; it was made

inevitable by the objective concrete situation and the realities of the development of social and political struggle in the Arab homeland and in backward countries in general.

The failure of individual rule, which looks forward to progressive horizons, to find a successful substitute for parliamentary democracy does not absolve that democracy, nor does it prove its efficacy, even though the bourgeoisie and reaction have used it to justify their distorted concept of democracy. But the failure of individual bureaucratic rule to achieve the full revolutionary mobilisation of the energies of the masses, that provides a positive basis for establishing socialist transformation on democratic foundations, is a reaffirmation to the toiling popular masses and their revolutionary vanguards that revolutionary democracy can only be fully and effectively applied if it is built on a popular vanguard organisation that ensures a wider and deeper form of mass democracy allowing the workers and peasants in particular, and the toiling masses in general, to play an effective vanguard role.

e — Revolutionary popular democracy is not an idealistic formula for the organisation of government in isolation from the actual concrete circumstances of the struggle of the masses and of the stage through which that struggle is passing. Nor is it a subjective wish because it is organically linked to the extent to which mass struggle has developed, both in depth and

width, and to the development of the revolution and the requirements of socialist construction.

In present circumstances when the change-over from a semi-feudal capitalist society is taking place in a number of Arab regions, power must be transferred from the feudal-bourgeois classes to the toiling classes. Therefore the parliamentary system must be discarded as constituting one form of the domination of the popular masses by those classes.

Discarding the parliamentary system does not mean turning to bureaucratic or military, dictatorial or individual, forms of rule. It means eliminating the bourgeois-semi-feudal framework of democracy and turning to a wider, deeper, firmer and sounder democracy — popular democracy, which can both curb reaction and ensure the mobilisation of the energies and potentialities of the masses for the revolutionary socialist construction of Arab society. Popular democracy constantly improves government, renews the impetus of the revolution, consolidates, extends and maintains the gains of the masses and provides an atmosphere favourable to the growth of mass activity and makes this activity more conscious and better organised.

f — If the concept of popular democracy implies a wide measure of democracy being made available to the masses, it also affirms the need to isolate the class and political forces which are hostile to the socialist revolution. This isolation must take both a legal form

and a popular one. The vestiges of the idea of "class cooperation" that still survive in the minds of the backward section of the masses must be dropped and liquidated. The battle with the anti-revolutionary reactionary forces requires long and stubborn struggle of various kinds and at all levels, and in all sectors of life — social, political, administrative, military and cultural. The battle with reaction requires that all attempts at sabotage by reaction be not only restrained and deterred, but completely annihilated. For thousands of years reaction has shown no mercy to the masses; therefore the masses must pose the problem of class struggle against the reactionary classes in a clear and decisive form: "Either we live or reaction does", and any compromise settlement is a lie or deceit and will result in reaction being saved.

However weak it seems to have grown, local reaction in all the Arab regions possesses huge strength and many weapons. It has material resources, it has moral and intellectual influence, it has its family links in the government. Also to be taken into account are the mistakes of the revolution and its shortcomings in action. And finally there is Arab reaction and world imperialism. These weapons will enable reaction to resist for a long time and to gather its strength and fight the battles against the popular masses, now through sabotaging and impeding socialist transformation, now through concocting conspiracies. Thus what is required in the battle against reaction is not so much reckless

courage as conscious, indefatigable and organised courage.

g — Popular democracy will not arise through some form of representation of the popular masses without a revolutionary framework and without organised revolutionary vanguards embracing the most profoundly conscious and steadiest struggle elements, endowed with political foresight and ability to act, inspired by a spirit of self-sacrifice, and absolutely loyal to the cause of the masses. Only such a revolutionary vanguard will give popular democracy its revolutionary spirit, and truly and honestly reflect the aspirations of the masses to nationalist-socialist revolution. Only such a vanguard can ensure equilibrium and harmony between, on the one hand, the centralism and effectiveness of popular organisation, the unity of revolutionary struggle and unity of constructive action, and, on the other hand, democracy in organisation imposed by the popular character of the revolution, which ensures the full mobilisation of the human resources of the masses.

The revolutionary vanguard organisation, which always maintains profound living links with the masses, which it is both at the head of and always attached to, which teaches them and learns from them, living with them in links of interaction, not of tutelage — only such an organisation can ensure that the popular democratic government is centralised and democratic. Only a government that fulfills these conditions can plan, mobilise

and recruit the popular masses so that all human and material resources may be activated for the achievement of socialist transformation and economic development.

h — The centralism of the popular democratic government cannot be seriously and effectively realized unless it arises as the consequence of revolutionary vanguard political organisation. But this centralism must not invalidate the principle of election and turn it into a purely formal operation. For popular councils to be democratic and revolutionary, they must be constituted through direct free suffrage at all levels, in the village, the town, the district and the governorate, and then at regional, and finally at national level.

The task of the nationalist-socialist vanguard is to ensure that the principle of popular ballot is both revolutionary and free, in the election of representative bodies and popular councils. Such a task can only be achieved if this vanguard can rally the overwhelming majority of the masses around itself, by regarding the masses as the base and bulwark of the revolution and, consequently, rejecting the principle of tutelage over the people or the exercise of power on behalf of the people through delegation. The distinction between the Fascist concept of the "élite" and the socialist concept of the vanguard is a fine one. Whereas the concept of the "élite" regards the masses as a passive and negative flock to be led to "happiness and justice" by the "élite"; this, in

practice, leads to the élite being closed to the masses and regarding itself as superior to them. Thus the élite inevitably tends to become isolated from the masses and to exercise direct dictatorship over them, sometimes through terrorism, sometimes through distorting public opinion and moulding it to suit its own wishes. But the socialist concept of the vanguard regards the masses as the essence of the revolution and of democracy, and leads to conscious and humble openness to them, which strengthens the vital links with the masses to the extent of their becoming organic, and urges them along the road to maturity and liberation from the moral influences of the feudal-bourgeois reality through friendly mutual interaction which regards the people as the spring of wisdom and the source of revolution.

The revolutionary application of popular democracy will not come about as the result of the subjective wishes of the vanguard, nor through the persistent repetition of the slogans of freedom and democracy. Objective foundations must be created to ensure that such application is serious and authentic. The objective and decisive foundation for the application of democracy is the ability of the vanguard to lead the overwhelming majority of the masses, on the basis of their free and profound confidence in the vanguard. For a party without masses is bound to degenerate into a gang that tyrannises over the masses.

The socialist revolutionary vanguard is the masses'

instrument for achieving a transformation in social and economic relations. However, for this transformation to be completely radical and humanist, it must be carried out by the masses themselves, with the socialist vanguard playing the role of mediator and leader (even if it is in power) whose task is to steer the march of the masses towards the socialist future in a scientific manner and by democratic means.

i — The political organisation of the popular revolutionary government at the stage of socialist construction in a backward country must rest on a basis of the leadership being not only unified and strong, but also democratic and popular. Therefore the principle of democratic centralism is the proper basis for the establishment of such a government. The democratic character of this government will be ensured by its political bodies being elected by the people, by ensuring that there is constant and effective supervision of these bodies by the people, by the higher bodies being elected by the lower, and by there being regular conferences of the popular councils and organisations. Democracy must be graduated upwards from bottom to top, until the principle of collective leadership provides the democratic image of revolutionary government at the summit. However, collective leadership does not mean that responsibility is blurred, nor must it impede the day by day initiatives of the revolutionary government. Nor must this leadership be deprived of absolute flexibility of movement.

Centralism in the political organisation of the government is ensured by the minority voluntarily and loyally submitting to the majority, the lower bodies to the higher, and the bodies and organisations to the decisions and instructions of the central leadership.

j — To ensure that the popular masses exercise their democratic rights in a conscious, disciplined and responsible manner, they must be mobilised within organisational frameworks which enable them to exercise power and raise the level of their political and social consciousness. These frameworks are workers' and peasants' unions, students' federations, youth organisations, employees' and staff organisations, womens' federations etc. The popular representative councils do not exhaust all the forms and dimensions of popular organisation; nor do they invalidate the role of these frameworks; on the contrary they complement them. Without the organisational frameworks and the popular councils, the masses become a nebulous entity, powerless, unconscious and devoid of conscious and responsible discipline.

Of course the Party cannot embrace all the popular masses, only their vanguards. It is therefore the "motor" which sets in motion and leads the organisations and the popular councils and crystallises their aspirations by its profound and penetrating view of the intellectual state of the masses, thus ensuring that the practice of democracy is both revolutionary and popular.

k — The linking of the issue of democracy, in an

abstract and absolute manner, with the hypothesis of a multiplicity of parties, represents the bourgeois rationale as regards the understanding of democracy. This issue must always be understood in the light of the concrete historical circumstances of social and political struggle.

A principal party that leads a front of political forces exercising political power, does not of necessity lead to moving away from democracy.

The hypothesis of the "leading party" is dictated by the need, at the present stage, for an unflinching central authority to lead the process of socialist construction. This has been confirmed by revolutionary socialist experiences throughout the world, and in particular by the situation of the developing countries. However, to ensure the popular exercise of democracy (which is a precondition for the success of socialist construction) two conditions must be met. The first is that the Party should be able to lead the overwhelming majority of the popular masses and ensure that they rally round it voluntarily and consciously. The second condition is that there should be internal democracy within the leading party.

The exercise of democracy within the leading party is not merely a question of elections, voting and irresponsible and unenlightened discussions at meetings. For democracy to be a means for the permanent development of the Party, for it to be a means of strengthening

its links with the masses, for it to be a means of entrenching its policy based on revolutionary principle and casting aside all that is opportunist, not based on principle and not revolutionary, the Party must meet all the objective conditions that permit of this kind of serious and conscious exercise of democracy. These conditions include :

1. That the Party's policy should always be clear and well defined, and in line with its ideological standpoints and basic aims. Only if the Party's tactical and strategic policy is constantly clarified in an analytical manner linked to the Party's basic theoretical standpoints can it be comprehended by its bases. This will also enable the bases to explain this policy clearly and scientifically to the non-Party masses. Moreover, it will provide the bases with the opportunity to discuss the Party's policy in a conscious and responsible manner, which will make it possible to correct and modify policy, should this be necessary.

If the Party's policy is always clear, this will help to create the objective conditions required for voluntary discipline in the ranks of the Party; it will also help to isolate from its ranks opportunist and destructive elements.

2. Constant struggle to prevent manifestations of backwardness and deviation infiltrating the ranks of the Party from the bourgeois-feudal-tribal state of affairs.

Lack of political education and scientific criteria in analysis and thinking is bound to lead to the creation of tribal groupings, a clique spirit and a feudal psychology in the ranks of the Party. If there is no democratic education in the ranks of the Party, and if there is ideological ambiguity, objective relations based on principle between Party members are impaired, and this leads to some of them seeking other links. In this way the Party's bases may degenerate into backward anarchistic groups centring on backward concepts, or into cliques of individual friendship, or centred on persons, and eventually relapse into surrendering to the vestiges of intellectual habits left by bygone historical eras.

There is always a danger of the petty bourgeois spirit and mentality affecting democracy within the Party and creating a split between the Party and the simple non-Party masses. The spirit and mentality of the petty bourgeoisie, which are manifested in individual arrogance, snobbery, laxness in struggle, showy and superficial conduct, provocative talk and extravagance masquerading as revolutionary fervour, the pursuit of profit and position, the assumption of superiority over the popular masses and the humble strugglers, avoidance of simple unremitting day to day action even as regards the smallest events and problems, with excessive "revolutionary" chatter, mere preaching without seeking objective instruments of struggle — all these are petty bourgeois characteristics that impair the Party's democracy and lead to the Party's being isolated and becoming

a clique, if it is at the stage of struggle for power, or being distorted into a bureaucratic class imposed on the masses from above if it is already in power.

3. The revolutionary exercise of democracy requires constant scientific indoctrination in the ranks of the Party. Revolutionary struggle and the exercise of political responsibility do not consist merely of good and honest intentions vis-à-vis the masses, nor are they merely the individual moral values of Party strugglers. Although the Party struggler must have these qualities, in themselves they do not qualify him for the conscious exercise of democracy within the Party, nor is it sufficient for the practice of positive revolutionary struggle aimed at transforming society.

Only scientific logic based on the objective scientific analysis of the circumstances of struggle and the realistic analysis of the concrete situation, which is continually developing and changing, can raise the standard of intellectual competence in the ranks of the Party. For it precludes all kinds of subjective thinking, such as improvisation, an imprecise way of looking at things, intellectual sloth, preaching, and other idealistic trends of thought. This sort of thinking impairs the objective relations within the Party and makes it incapable of creating the objective instruments of its revolutionary struggle.

l — In the transition to socialism most revolutionary

socialist experiences have witnessed a dangerously negative phenomenon at the stage of state capitalism. This is the rise of a new class—the bureaucracy. It has grown to alarming proportions in a number of socialist countries, where it has become an obstacle to the development of democracy, distorted the natural development of socialist relations in society and become a special power that has taken its place above the direct producers in particular and the masses of the people in general.

The system of state capitalism, along with the numerical and organisational weakness of the working class, create the objective conditions for the growth of bureaucracy. Therefore the democratic direction of the means of production, the organisation of the working class and the maintenance of this class's comparative independence from the government, will pave the way to the development of popular democracy and help to diminish the negative characteristics of the system of state capitalism.

The democratic management of the means of production has become a basic condition for the exercise of popular democracy at the political level. Therefore the workers' councils must assume a basic role in the direction of industrial and productive enterprises. And with due regard to the requirements of socialist construction and the demands of technical development, which are growing ever more complex, the burden of managing industry must be gradually transferred to the working

classes until their control is effective enough for them to ensure labour control of productive processes, and to enable the masses of the workers to take the initiative in improving working conditions, increasing production and organising administrative activity. It will also ensure that the routine and inhuman aspects of the administration of factory and productive enterprises are corrected. Finally, it will ensure that the working class is consciously and sincerely absorbed in the problems of socialist construction and promote in them a feeling of the morality of human labour as being something that is an honour to man rather than a burden.

m — Under the rule of a particular class the government's administrative institutions are bound to be the image of that rule and one of its instruments. Therefore, once the Party holds the reins of power it must develop the state institutions in such a way that they serve the popular masses instead of being a burden on them, and so that these institutions become capable of effective participation in the problems of socialist construction.

It is a tangible fact that these institutions are separated from the masses, and the strong links and interlocking relations that exist between the higher echelons of these institutions and reaction will mean that, if these institutions continue as they are, they will be an obstacle to the development of popular democracy. Therefore the point of departure for the socialist

and popular development of these institutions is the establishment of strict popular control over them. Such control will renew the mentality of the institutions, their methods and modes of operation, and rescue them from routine, indifference, and bureaucratic dogmatism. It will also liberate government officials from their commercial relations with the state, and turn the official into a citizen who is devoted to the causes of the people and believes in the objectives of the masses.

n — The practical exercise of popular democracy requires the renunciation of the principle of the army being excluded from politics; otherwise this exercise will be crippled and distorted, because it deprives an important section of the citizenry from the exercise of their political rights. The practical consequence of the principle of excluding the army from politics is that the army, or part of it at least, will be dominated and used as a reserve force by reaction. Indeed, the idea of the professional army is basically the principle of reaction and the bourgeoisie in their rule, because pure professionalism, accompanied by material privileges, will make the army a pliant instrument in the hands of the exploiting classes.

The revolutionary struggle of the Arab masses has had echoes and repercussions in the military sector in a number of Arab regions, in some of which there have arisen armies that have been revolutionary in the fullest sense of the word. Therefore this political action in

the military sector has become a basic reality in the historical development of Arab struggle, and every attempt to disregard it is to sabotage the revolution and to impede the course of socialist transformation.

The democratic exercise of politics is not only a right of citizens who work in the military sector; it is a basic necessity of socialist construction. Throughout the course of revolutionary socialist struggle attention must always be paid not only to eliminating and obstructing the remnants of reaction, but also — and this is essential — to the popular and socialist development of the middle of the road character of the army cadres. Obviously the need for such development becomes more urgent as class struggle and social contradictions grow more acute in the advance towards social transformation and its expansion.

It is a matter of urgent necessity that the military and civil revolutionary vanguards should be organically fused in such a way as to create ideological interaction between them. This will allow of unity of thinking and the joint, direct, practical and integrated confrontation of the problems of socialist construction prevent military isolationism and fuse the army and the people in a common revolutionary destiny.

The political and ideological indoctrination of the army is in no way less important than military training. Indeed, it creates an atmosphere favourable to the rise

of a new revolutionary concept of discipline based on belief in ideals rather than fear of compulsion. It also liquidates bourgeois professionalist methods in the relations between superior and subordinate, creating comradely relations inspired by belief in the cause of the masses, in which compulsion is an exceptional measure applicable only to corrupt elements.

Military service does honour to the citizen and should be performed by all. In backward countries like our homeland military service may be turned into a school for the socialist revolution and a means of eliminating illiteracy and intellectual backwardness and for the revolutionary activation of the rural areas, with a view to completing and promoting the socialist agrarian revolution and giving it its human content.

o — Adherence to truth is a basic factor in the revolutionary practice of popular democracy. Truth is at once revolutionary and moral, and adherence to it is the only thing that distinguishes the revolutionary from the opportunist; it also distinguishes a true call from propaganda, and the progressive from the demagogue.

To conceal the truth from the masses is to disregard the simplest requirements of democracy, and to doubt their wisdom and their ability to distinguish between right and wrong. To doubt the common sense of the masses is the first step towards a lapse into Fascist concepts.

For the sake of flexibility and realism in political action, the consequences and advantages of every move must be considered. However, a distinction must always be made between immediate and temporary advantage and permanent and long-term advantage. The ability to make this distinction is one of the basic characteristics that differentiate the revolutionary from the opportunist. The slogan of interest, correctly understood, and on a long-term basis, does not conflict with respect for truth.

Adherence to the truth as regards the masses constitutes a means of educating them and a basic factor in complementing their political maturity. Therefore the revolutionary vanguards and the revolutionary government must always tell the people the truth about everything related to their political, economic and social affairs. They must disclose errors, whether intentional or unintentional, great or small. They must show up aspects of weakness in development and point out the difficulties and obstacles that confront socialist construction, whether these arise as the result of ignorance, opportunism, negligence or sabotage.

The road of revolutionary rule is not ready made, and its course may be impeded by contradictions. It may be obliged to agree to a number of temporary concessions or necessary compromises, or sometimes to withdraw — all this may happen in all fields of revolutionary action. In such cases the people must be confronted with the truth without equivocation, ambiguity

or untrue opportunist justifications. The people must know of victories and setbacks, gains and losses. The people must be frankly told of every bargain and every setback which, though inconsistent with ideological principles, may be required by the circumstances of a particular stage or dictated by minor contradictions or the revolution's inability to confront them in any particular situation.

Being told the truth will not weaken the revolutionary determination of the masses when they are led by conscious and experienced revolutionary vanguards. On the contrary, it will ensure serious mobilisation and conscious planning for the eventual elimination of these contradictions in other circumstances and another stage.

Every attempt to conceal the truth is an overt lapse from revolutionism into opportunism.

p — Widespread illiteracy among the popular masses will impede their exercise of democracy, which will be defective, superficial and purely formal if unaccompanied by political indoctrination providing the masses with a minimum of education to enable them to understand public affairs and the broad outlines of political issues and socialist construction. Thus the complete and rapid liquidation of illiteracy is obviously a necessity and a top priority, as are efforts not only to teach illiterate and semi-literate citizens to read and write, but also to enable them to acquire a certain

degree of knowledge so that they may exercise their democratic rights in a conscious manner. The elimination of illiteracy is an urgent duty for the government, the Party and all the mass organisations.

q — The exercise of popular democracy will remain incomplete as long as women are excluded from the public life of society. Therefore the emancipation of Arab women is a democratic as well as a human necessity. Regarding woman as an inferior is an integral part of the ideology of the tribal-feudal society. Therefore the emancipation of women is one of the first tasks to be performed by the nationalist-socialist revolution, for a liberated modern democracy cannot be completely and soundly constructed unless the problem of the emancipation of women is faced up to courageously, comprehensively and as a matter of principle. Education alone cannot ensure the revolutionary emancipation of women, and if this problem is left to solve itself the course of Arab development will be lopsided and unhomogeneous, and the socialist construction of society will be distorted and faulty if no radical solution is found for the problem of the emancipation of women in Arab society, because socialism is a solution of the problem of every human being, whether man or woman.

The decline of colonialist influence, the disintegration of the feudal-tribal system, and the spread of education have resulted in steps being taken towards

the emancipation of women. But only a socialist society can ensure the objective conditions for the rapid and radical emancipation of women.

The Party and the revolutionary government must make every effort to combat the negative mentality as regards women and to liquidate the vestiges of reactionary ideas, transforming this struggle into a method of practical application that will enable women to play an effective part in public life and in struggle. This will remove all the shackles that impede the development of women and allow them full scope to develop their human personality. At the same time, however, the revolution and the revolutionary government must oppose superficial, purely formal bourgeois concepts of the emancipation of women, which are inconsistent with the positive aspect of Arab tradition and at the same time obstruct the cause of socialist construction.

Real freedom for women can only be achieved through struggle on two fronts: struggle against backward frameworks, traditions and customs, and struggle against the formalist bourgeois concept of freedom, this new concept of the freedom of women being linked to the issue of the socialist construction of society.

SOCIALISM — FEATURES OF THE ARAB ROAD TO SOCIALISM —

— 1 —

The Arab Ba'th Socialist Party was the first revolutionary movement in the Arab homeland to present the problem of socialism side by side with the problem of nationalism and to engage in resolute and unflagging struggle on its behalf.

With the Party's revolutionary socialist principles as a basis it has been possible to expose all aspects of the backwardness, reaction and corruption that were a feature of most of the regions of the Arab homeland; these principles were the first spark in a struggle which laid bare the fraudulence of the traditional political institutions and prepared the way for their demolition. In a situation immersed in the darkness of subservient and opportunist reaction, in a political atmosphere whose methods of thinking and struggle were outworn, sterile and traditional, only the Arab Ba'th raised its voice and spoke out loud and clear, in a socialist spirit, to expose the facts of the Arab reality which was dom-

inated by colonialism, exploitation and backwardness. The Party was the first to introduce the spirit of the modern age into the field of Arab nationalist struggle by affirming that the cause of socialism was inseparable from that of nationalism.

In the midst of constant unrelenting struggle against colonialism, the Party has never shelved the issue of socialism, nor has it allowed itself to become immersed in slogans that were only relevant to particular stages, as has local communism. It has always kept the cause of the toiling masses before its eyes, and has never allowed itself any negligence on this score. In the regions where it has become firmly established it has led direct struggle against feudalism and capitalist exploitation, and in the same regions it has succeeded in impelling an important section of the popular masses — for the first time in the history of Arab struggle — into the arena of direct class struggle and political action, thereby strengthening the roots of nationalist struggle and giving it its socialist popular content.

Although at the first stage the Party's socialist concepts were not clear and well defined, its revolutionary standpoint in struggle has prevented its becoming submerged in a reformist tendency which could have led to its being absorbed in and acclimatised to the bourgeois frameworks of Arab society. For this reason, in its day to day practical struggle it has surpassed many of the socialist concepts which it had defined in its

general principles and its programme when it first came into existence. In this way its socialist viewpoint has acquired its scientific character and become ever more profoundly radical.

— 2 —

In the course of its intellectual and practical development the Party has surpassed utopian petty bourgeois concepts of socialism, but these concepts have had a negative effect both on the social composition of the Party in some regions and on the unity of socialist thinking in its bases. Only serious and direct criticism of some of the concepts that existed in the Party can ensure that their effects are liquidated, once and for all.

1 — In a negative and inadequate confrontation of the challenge of local communism and in an attempt to stress the nationalist cause (at a time when it was an obscure and tender plant, facing rejection by local communism and distortion by reactionary nationalist elements) the Party gave the name of “Arab socialism” to the kind of socialism it advocated. In the circumstances then prevailing this kind of confrontation did have its positive aspects; it meant that Arab nationalist slogans were affirmed and became more profoundly rooted in the minds of the people, and that

the possibility of unity was also affirmed, to become the goal which the vast masses of the people were determined to achieve.

However, stressing the nationalist characteristics of socialism in this way without explaining its theoretical foundations may lead to a sort of nationalist fanaticism vis-à-vis world socialist thought. Instead of becoming the point of departure for a scientific and conscious confrontation of anti-Arabism masquerading in a progressive guise, this attitude, in fact, amounted to no more than a negative rejection without theoretical content. And the so-called “Arab” qualities ascribed to the Party’s socialism were no more than words, devoid of scientific purport, which, at one stage of the Party’s struggle, divorced socialism from its social and class context.

Instead of the Party’s nationalist point of departure for socialism leading to the presentation of a clear and carefully studied point of view comprehending the characteristics of Arab reality in all its details and with all its contradictions, and to the production of theoretical studies explaining the Arab road to socialism — through an analysis of the economic and class formation of Arab societies — instead of this standpoint leading to a scientific and aware openness to the Arab state of affairs, in a number of the Party’s writings it degenerated into mere general slogans and emotional talk about the “Arab characteristics” of socialism and the genuine merits of these characteristics.

Although the efforts made to explain the significance of “the national characteristics of the Arab people” and their repercussions on the Party’s socialism were inadequate, such attempts were made in some of the Party’s writings, although for the most part they were no more than partial and did not go so far as to provide a clear scientific formulation of socialism.

The recognition of individual ownership, in its absolute form, however restricted its scope, is a petty bourgeois concept, because the scientific socialist concept regards human labour as the only source of value so that, if it goes beyond the field of personal use, individual ownership is bound to involve exploitation, however restricted the area in which it operates and however low its rate of return.

The Party’s recognition of ownership as a natural right has had adverse effects on its class composition and on Party education. By virtue of its individualist character, the petty bourgeois mentality has undermined the organisational coherence of many of the Party’s branches, because the Party’s intellectual and class frontiers were ill-defined so that both the bourgeoisie and the popular masses conceived the idea that the Party’s socialism suited their interests, or at least was not opposed to them. Thus in certain branches the popular masses on the one hand and the bourgeoisie on the other were included within the limits of the Party.

In this way petty bourgeois elements and the petty bourgeois mentality came to exert considerable influence in some branches.

If the rightist elements failed to win the Party over to their positions, in certain areas the Party remained insufficiently popular in its composition. Instead of the petty bourgeoisie remaining in background and secondary positions in the Party, for considerable periods it occupied positions of command. Although the Party has always condemned the conception of reformist socialism that advocates cooperation between the classes, the fact that the petty bourgeoisie occupied important positions in the ranks of the Party in certain branches prevented the Party's socialist struggle from attaining its full dimensions and bringing mass struggle to its natural conclusion. This was because the distinctive quality of the petty bourgeoisie in politics is compromise (it both opposes the exploiting classes and fears the toiling masses) and this always involves middle of the road methods. In one branch of the Party the Party leaders lapsed into opportunist reformist policy for considerable periods, and opportunist elements who had infiltrated it made a breach in the framework of the bourgeois-feudal government and conceived a fancy for the tactics of participating in governments, though in penetrating this framework they limited themselves to trifles that did no real harm to the established regime. Although expelled from the Party, this group does constitute an unhealthy phenomenon that goes beyond the persons

in question, and is the direct result of theoretical obscurity and insufficient profundity in understanding socialist concepts and in methods of political action.

— 3 —

Socialism aims at establishing a new social system which will create the new objective conditions, economic, social, intellectual and political, that will liberate man from all kinds of exploitation, domination and lethargy, and enable him to be a total, free man.

For socialism to be a total and radical solution of the problem of the Arab man, the new system must fulfil the conditions which ensure :

a — Abolition of the material conditions of exploitation which rob the citizen of his human essence.

b — Consolidation of the democratic content of socialism, because freedom is the solid foundation on which socialism is built.

c — The socialist and scientific education of the citizen, which will liberate him from all the backward social framework and traditions he has inherited so that it will be possible to create a new Arab man, endowed with an open, scientific mind and with a new socialist morality and believing in collective values.

The socialist transformation of society means — in principle — the transfer of the means of production from private ownership to public ownership by the whole people, the final abolition of the need for the capitalist middleman, the individual's income being directly linked to his work and his efficiency and the fusion of all classes in a single crucible and, finally, the abolition of profit economy and the creation of an economy based on needs.

In backward countries, including the Arab homeland, socialism comes to fulfil a double requirement : the total abolition of exploitation and the elimination of the inherited backwardness of these countries so as to catch up with advanced industrial countries.

The Arab economy is fundamentally an agricultural one, and therefore both unbalanced and backward.

The economic upsurge that took place in certain Arab countries at the end of the second World War has almost come to an end in most of them, and the rates of growth of production are now less than the rates of population growth.

The halting of this growth is not accidental or temporary; it is the inevitable result of the feudal bourgeois economic system of our homeland. The local Arab capitalisms are based on commerce, real estate and usury and, because of their deficient resources, they invest

their money only in light consumer production sectors, as being profitable and yielding quick returns without requiring intensive financing. They have therefore been unable to create the basic conditions for industrial progress, and this is why poverty and backwardness have survived. It has also made the gap between our economy and those of the advanced countries deeper and wider.

The low level of national income and private saving, the direction of local capital into speculation and the pursuit of commercial gain, huge quick profits, usurious activities and the luxury of the “hereditary idlers” — all these factors demand that the traditional capitalist road to development be avoided, because it is a dead end. Today the Arab masses have to achieve an industrial revolution that was achieved by the bourgeoisie in the capitalist West. The Arab bourgeoisie is certainly incapable of this. Socialism is the only road that leads to liberation from both backwardness and exploitation. The road to the real and total transformation of Arab society — its transformation into a modern socialist society — lies through the total destruction of present economic structures (feudal and capitalist) of Arab society.

The methods of a free capitalist economy lead to the spread of economic anarchy, and create the objective conditions for inevitable subservience to neo-colonialism. They make the state an instrument for the transfer of wealth to the rich, sustain the activities of social groups

that are parasitic on social life and those linked with colonialism, amass wealth in their pockets, and as a result keep the masses in their misery and backwardness.

In backward countries, including our Arab homeland, the bourgeois capitalist system is incapable of mobilising the vast under-employed labour force in the rural areas, of organising production scientifically and of mobilising the energies and resources of the country that have so far been wasted.

The world today stands on the threshold of the second industrial revolution whose aim is the automation of work, and the Arab capitalisms which have been unable to achieve the first industrial revolution are even less able to achieve the second, whose requirements far outstrip the capacities of Arab capitalism, and even those of Western capitalism in most of the countries where it is the established system. If the second industrial revolution is achieved without the Arab homeland being able to achieve it, our Arab homeland will be far more backward than it is today.

Therefore only the socialist system is capable of enlisting the people, with all their material and human resources, for the achievement of the desired scientific progress in an age when scientific and technical progress is so rapid.

This being the state of affairs as regards the na-

tional bourgeoisie, the overthrow of this class and its allies is indispensable for the achievement of a radical turning-point in the life of the Arab people. And the new government that will build socialism will represent the workers, the peasants, the revolutionary intellectuals and the petty bourgeoisie (commerce, industry and services). But so that the socialist revolution may run its full course unimpeded and construct a sound socialist national society, it must depend fundamentally on the toiling masses.

The general outlines of the process of socialist transformation are as follows :

1 — To achieve socialist transformation and to ensure the objective conditions for the rapid growth of the national economy, the ownership of all the important productive sectors, financial institutions, public utilities, the principal means of transportation, large scale real estate, external trade and the main branches of internal trade, must be transferred to the people.

2 — In the present state of national struggle in the Arab homeland, petty bourgeois elements are one of the principal forces to bear the burdens of struggle. In view of this fact, and because of their numbers, they must be positively incorporated in the socialist sector only when this sector has achieved successes which prove that it has grown strong and become firmly established. In this way the petty bourgeois elements will be willing

to be incorporated in this sector because they are convinced that their future is assured and stable. This process must also take place through unremitting struggle for education and inculcating socialist consciousness, and within the framework of local programmes drawn up in conformity with the conditions prevailing in each region.

3 — In the circumstances prevailing in backward countries, nationalisation, covering the major sectors of the national economy, thereby giving the popular revolutionary government full direction of the national economy, is the first revolutionary step towards socialism and opens the door to the socialist transformation of society. In a backward country where there is no material base for socialism, the process of nationalisation generally stops at the stage of state capitalism. This system does have certain positive aspects, because it plays a progressive role in development, creates the objective conditions for the construction of socialism and becomes an instrument of struggle against the old society. But this positive aspect of state capitalism must not be allowed to conceal the long-term goal of social transformation, which is to develop Arab society into a society that is fully socialist in conditions and character. Therefore this stage must, from the start, be appraised in conformity with a scientific outlook and attention must be concentrated on the negative aspects inherent in it, so that their growth may be prevented and they may eventually be eliminated.

The first of the negative aspects of state capitalism is the weakening of socialist democracy and the emergence of the bureaucracy, which exercises a sort of tutelage over the producing masses. If the labouring classes play no part in the direction of socialist transformation, if the proletariat is numerically weak and politically backward, the dangers of bureaucracy are aggravated. Therefore the only way to curb the domination of the masses by bureaucracy is to strengthen the democratic content of socialism. This can only be achieved if it is made possible for the masses of workers and peasants to participate in the direction of the economy.

Therefore the socialist transformation of society, whether through nationalisation or the socialist transformation of the rural areas, must go hand in hand with the encouragement of constructive initiative on the part of the masses. This must start with a serious degree of participation, which gradually grows stronger and more effective until the whole burden of directing the economy is laid on the shoulders of the producing masses when, through playing their role in construction, they obtain control of the economic and social direction of the sectors of production.

The organised masses are the only substitute for bureaucracy which can provide both the democratic and the human content of socialism. Bureaucracy distorts democracy and robs it of its human content. Thus

socialism can only be achieved and developed through the organised masses and through dependence on their initiative and confidence in their powers and potentials.

4 — The socialist confrontation of the land problem requires that the slogan “the land belongs to its tillers” be made a reality; it also avoids insistence on individual tenure. What is important and essential in the land problem is the creation of socialist production relations in the rural areas; therefore in the long run, collective farms are the socialist framework for the rural areas.

Socialist production relations in the rural areas prevent the rise there of a petty bourgeoisie which, as happened in Western Europe, can become a politically conservative force. It is also a matter of principle that relations of this kind ensure the objective conditions for raising labour productivity in the rural areas and make it possible to plan and implement programmes of agricultural development. Finally, these collective socialist relations will make it possible to rescue the peasant from his traditional isolation and individualism and to raise social standards in the rural areas to those of the towns.

The land problem must be dealt with on a basis of scientific socialist way of thinking, and socialism as a principle and a standpoint demands an agrarian revolution, not merely agrarian reform. Agrarian revolution will open the door to a rapid economic upsurge

in the other production sectors, because it will open up an extensive internal market, once the peasant masses are liberated from poverty and exploitation.

An essential condition for the success of this revolution is that the peasant masses should be allowed to play a positive and responsible part in the agrarian revolution, that their initiative should be aroused and that their forces should be relied on for the improvement of the agricultural situation.

5 — The economic and cultural backwardness from which our people are suffering require an unprecedented strengthening of our forces so as to raise the economic standard of our people and to achieve the socialist revolution. Socialist planning is the effective course that will make possible the scientific and practical employment of all national resources, material, natural and human.

a — In spite of the low level of national income of the Arab homeland as a whole, it is still possible for important groups and classes in our society to save, and planning will make it possible to assemble the capital necessary for the construction of an advanced industry in a comparatively short time.

b — Without planning saving will run to waste in real estate transactions and usury or in the consumption of luxury goods injurious to our balance of trade. Only

planning can ensure that a policy of austerity is implemented for the realisation of huge construction projects. Finally, planning can make it possible to concentrate investment in the most important sectors and to extend the objectives of investment beyond their present limit, always keeping the future in view through the realisation of achievements that ensure the real development of our national economy and the avoidance of showy achievements that do nothing to promote production or increase returns.

Planning at Arab national level is essential both for unity and for socialism. The liberal framework of the economy creates contradictions between the Arab regions and leads to the resources for economic growth being wasted. Planning at national level ensures the objective conditions for the coordination of development programmes as between the Arab regions, ensuring that by becoming integrated they may play their part in making Arab economic integration an effective reality which will help to consolidate political unity between the Arab regions.

6 — A new socialist society can only be completely, rapidly and economically constructed if the human energies of our people are fully mobilised and it is the revolutionary vanguards that will watch over implementation, ensure that it is successful and achieve the necessary harmony between the technical aspects and the human requirements of economic development.

Only an organised revolutionary popular vanguard can mobilise the masses of the people and evoke their ardent and unremitting initiative, inspired by ideals which renew their enthusiasm for their simple daily work.

In a number of Arab regions the two basic conditions for positive revolutionary action have been met — they are the extensive and profound activation of the masses, and a revolutionary and conscious vanguard to lead them. The selection and formation of an aware vanguard from the present revolutionary organisations and from workers, peasants and revolutionary intellectuals in the ranks of the non-Party masses must continue so as to ensure that socialist revolutionary action continues, that its ideological standards are raised and that its scientific openness to the concrete and developing reality increases.

This vanguard will be a true reflection of the aspirations and wishes of the masses. It will help to give the people's initiative a practical form, promote their vigilance and give their direct control of the state a real and effective form.

The construction of a socialist society is not a law imposed from above to be enforced by a single bureaucratic stroke. It is unremitting day to day work involving patience and self-denial. Only a revolutionary vanguard can lead the mass advance which our people are

experiencing, and create the conditions which will prevent the masses from relapsing into oscillation between negative political stagnation and temporary superficial stagnation. Such a situation makes socialist achievements a relationship based exclusively on interests between the revolutionary government and the masses of our people.

The fundamental characteristic of this vanguard is ideological consciousness and a precise knowledge of the laws governing the transformation of societies and the rule of the march of history. Such openminded knowledge, subject to development, can reduce the possibility of error and direct struggle and living experiences towards revolutionary change, through its direct involvement in and analysis of the existing reality.